

REMARKS

Pursuant to the present amendment, claims 30, 35 and 40 have been canceled and claims 22, 31, 32, 36, 37 and 41 have been amended. Thus, claims 1-9, 22, 26-29, 31-34, 36-39 and 41 are pending in the present application. No new matter has been introduced by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein.

In the Advisory Action, claims 1-9 were allowed, and claims 30, 31, 35, 36, 40 and 41 were objected to but indicated to be allowable if re-presented in independent form.

Pursuant to the present amendment, independent claims 22, 32 and 37 have been amended to include the limitations from now-canceled claims 30, 35 and 40, respectively. Accordingly, it is believed that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

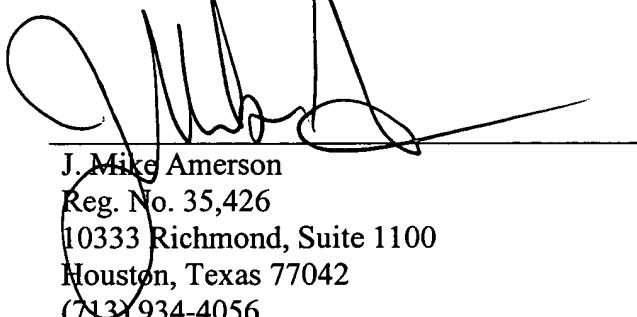
It should be understood that in making the amendments set forth herein, Applicants do not acquiesce in the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue claims of the scope set forth in the rejected claims in a later filed application should they desire to do so. Moreover, since the amendments set forth herein merely re-present allowable dependent claims in independent form, it is believed that there are no issues of prosecution history estoppel with respect to these claims.

It is believed that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 934-4055 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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